

*The Reasonableness and Advantage of National Humiliations,
upon the Approach of War.*

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S E R M O N

Preached before the

U N I V E R S I T Y

O F O X F O R D,

At St. MARY's,

On Wednesday, Jan. 9. 1739-40.

Being the Day appointed by his Majesty for
a General FAST and Humiliation, in
order to obtain of Almighty God Pardon
for our Sins, and to implore his Blessing
and Assistance on our Arms against Spain.

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of St. Mary-Hall, in Oxford.

O X F O R D,

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And if ye go to War in your land against the Enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an Alarm with the Trumpets, and ye shall be remembred before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your Enemies.

THese words, which contain more in them than appears to us at first sight, are the directions of Moses to the children of *Israel*, upon the Approach of War.

The only difficulty that appears to us, lies in the expression of *blowing an Alarm with the Trumpets*, which however may easily be removed by looking back to the preceding parts of the Chapter; especially if we at the same time recollect some antient customs of the Mosaic Law.

In the beginning of the Chapter, Moses is commanded by God, *to make two Trumpets of Silver*, which, according to the different manner whereby they were sounded, were to be made use of, either for directing the Journeys

ings of the Camps ; Or for Calling together the congregation of the people, at ordinary, stated times ; --- Or upon days of gladness, and in the beginnings of the months ; Or also upon Days of Public Fasting and Humiliation. Of which latter point we have a clear proof in the Prophet Joel ; *Blow ye the Trumpet*, says he, *in Zion, sound an Alarm in the holy Mountain*. Ch. 2. v. 1. *Sanctify a Fast, call a solemn Assembly*. Ch. 2. v. 15. And questionless in the passage of Scripture now before us, the *Blowing of the Trumpets* which is there spoken of, may be well understood not only in a military, but in a religious Sense ; and the rather, since there is a very signal blessing annext to the due performance of that, which it figuratively stands for, namely public National Fasting and Humiliation in the beginning of a War, wherein 'tis certain that *the Enemy oppresseth us.*

Upon which very great and awful Occasion we are all assembled together *this Day*, in order to implore the divine Assistance : and certainly 'tis the duty of every serious and confederate Christian earnestly to beseech God, that we here, and that all our fellow-subjects elsewhere, may approach unto him, and humble ourselves before him in such a manner, as may induce him to cast an eye of compassion and favour upon us. Which blessings we may expect with no small degree of probability, if it any ways appears, that this Public Humiliation of ours, did not arise from a bare compliance with religious forms of Government, but from a just sense of our own and the Nation's unworthiness,

ness, and from a fixt composed resolution of amending our lives, and behaviour for the future.

Nor must we flatter our selves, that an extraordinary act of Religion, like this at present, (upon which the happiness of infinite numbers of people depends,) either can, or ought to be performed by us, in a superficial and hasty manner: We must rather endeavour to make our contrition really sincere; and proportion it, as near as may be, to the great and extensive nature of the dangers which we deprecate, and of the blessings which we petition for.

'Tis in vain to amuse our selves with a Belief, (as too many I very much fear are apt to do,) that the Events of War, and other human affairs, correspond, if I may so say, almost entirely with the probability of second Causes: and that there is little reason for being dismayed, much less for humbling our selves, whenever any National Scheme has been at first concerted by Men of great foresight and sagacity, and when 'tis to be executed afterwards by persons of approved courage and conduct. Yet still permit me to say, that wise and pious Men will only presume to hope the best in these very probable cases: They will never be over-confident, nor over-sanguine; Well knowing that to be vain upon these occasions, is to be presumptuous, and that an undue reliance upon our own wisdom and policy, and upon the regular tendency of second causes, is in effect both Forgetting and Affronting Him, who is the Author of what we call

call *Chance*, and *Fortune*, as well as *Order*, and *Regularity*.

It is true, God generally thinks fit to act in an uniform, connected, equable course of things, and in the main, (which gives us an exalted idea of his infinite power and knowledge) makes use of such means as are plain, and few, and universal in their effects; thereby intending, amongst other things, that men might be taught to pursue the common duties of life with stedfastness, and with probable conjectures about the events of them; (since otherwise they might sit down in a state of diffidence, and inactivity;) But then on the other hand, the same supremely Wise and Good Being, as he well knows the pride and self-sufficiency of our natures, judges it proper now and then to break asunder this Series of causes and effects, that thereby we may be induced to repose our whole Faith upon Him, every moment, and in every act of life, and in regard to every thing that can affect us.

From whence it follows, that the events which we expect to arise from second causes are never absolutely to be depended upon, but in concurrence with divine assistance; for what men style the *course of Nature*, is really and truly the *Will of God* directing the course of Nature: and *Chance*, which we so often talk of, is only another word for those effects of Providence, which we do not perceive the reason of: and what we call an *unforeseen, unavoidable accident*, is in truth nothing less than the unerring counsel, and fore-appointment

ment of God. To talk thus is not only strict Religion, but strict Philosophy: Since the smallest event must proceed from some original cause, as well as the greatest; and since an Omnipresent Omniscient Being, may, from the nature of his Attributes, as well attend to such an event, as to others much more momentous; For what we call *ease*, and *difficulty* in these matters, can no ways enter into our idea of the Supreme Being. --- So that all human events, [Since God foreknows every thing that human freewill shall either chuse, or reject, and since free moral agents, while they effect their own ends, are at the same time carrying on the designs of Providence,] all human events, I say, are just so many several Instruments in the hands of God; in which, as Scripture tells us, Sovereign Power and Might are lodged: --- Chron. 29.10. *He is the God of Knowledge, and by him all Actions are weighed.*

1 Sam. 2. 3. of 3qmetis Hail I

These just ideas of divine Providence, joined with a due sense of our own weakness and unworthiness, together with sincere repentance and resolutions of amendment, are undoubtedly the best and most proper qualifications, in order to sanctify this our Fast, and draw down that success upon the *Arms* of these Kingdoms which we all jointly and earnestly wish for. Nothing will ever procure National blessings, but National virtues. --- We may observe in Christian History, that neither the wisdom and policy of some, nor an ardent and glowing love of their country in others,

(tho'

(tho' all in themselves very excellent qualities,) have ever availed any people, except they joined reliance on God to human wisdom, and the knowledge, and practice of Religion to public zeal. Otherwise, as God himself has declared, *swiftness has not advantaged the swift, the strong have not strengthened their force, neither have the mighty delivered themselves.* Amos 2. 14.

Having thus briefly suggested to you the true preparatives to Public Fasting, I shall endeavour

I. *First,* To give you some account of the reasonableness and propriety of these National Humiliations, on the Approach of War. And this I apprehend may be intimated to us in the Text it self, under the expression of *blowing an Alarm with the Trumpets.*

II. *Secondly,* I shall attempt to show you, that these Humiliations are only proper to be made, when the War in it self is *just and lawful:* Or in other Words, *when the Enemy oppresses us.*

III. *Thirdly and Lastly,* I shall subjoin a few general Reflections, which will arise naturally from the preceding parts of my Discourse.

IV. *First,* I shall endeavour to give you some Scriptural accounts of these Public Humiliations upon the Approach of War, together

gether with the reasonableness and propriety of them.

As we find Thanksgivings for National blessings, so we find public Fastings for the depreciation of national punishments, and for obtaining future mercies, prescribed very early by God himself in the Old Testament. In regard to such as relate to the present occasion, we read in the book of *Judges*, that the children of *Israel*, before they waged War against the *Benjamites*, assembled themselves together in great numbers at *Mizpeh*, (a place where the States of the land were wont to be convened upon very extraordinary occasions,) and that *they there offered Sacrifices, and wept, and fasted all day until even*. Judg. ch. 20. In consequence of which Humiliation of theirs, the succeeding War, tho' unfortunate at first, was soon crowned with very eminent success. --- Afterwards, in *Samuel's* time, when the children of *Israel* had long gone astray after *Baalim*, and *Astoreah*, (that is, in other words, when they had long given themselves up to luxury and lasciviousness,) and when they had been overcome by the *Philistines* in several conflicts, they were exhorted by the Prophet to prepare their hearts, to return to God, and serve him only. 1 Sam. ch. 7. He appointed an Assembly once more at *Mizpeh*: *They all offered Sacrifices, they drew water and poured it out before the Lord*, (which ceremony is thought by many to be emblematical of their lost and ruined condition;) *they fasted that day, and said, we have sinned against the Lord*. From which

which very time the affairs of *Israel* prospered more and more. --- In *Jehosaphat's Reign*, when several nations had combined together, and were upon the very point of destroying his kingdom unjustly, we are told that he feared, and proclaimed a fast throughout all *Judah*. He stood amidst the congregation in the courts of the Temple, and said, *O Lord God of our Fathers* --- if when evil cometh upon us, such as the sword, or pestilence, we stand before this house, and in thy presence (for thy name is in this house) cry unto thee in our affliction, then wilt thou bear, and help. 2 Chron. ch. 20.

But the Fast which of all others, is described in the most pompous and affecting language, is that which is delivered down to us in the Book of *Joel*. Ch. 2. The time indeed, and the occasions upon which it was denounced, are not any ways expressly specified unto us, either by Rabbinical, or Christian Antiquaries: Yet still 'tis highly probable that 'twas appointed, not only to avert a dreadful famine, but also to deprecate the dangers which threatened the *Jews*, from *Abyssian* invasions; and that several antient writers in the Church were of this opinion may be collected from the commentaries both of ¹ St. *Jerom* and of ² *Theodoret*. Yet even in this case the Prophet *Joel* assures the *Jews*, that God was still gracious, and ready to preserve them, provided they repented sincerely from their hearts, and not in outward form, and ceremony only.

¹ Hieronym. in *Joel*. c. I. v. 6.

² Theodores in *Joel*. c. I. v. 4.

In the Primitive Church we can expect no accounts of Public ¹ Humiliations, till after Christianity was established, and supported by the Civil Power: and then indeed the *Roman* Empire was of such great extent, that twas thought sufficient for distinct districts, and kingdoms, to humble themselves before God, upon the approach of such particular respective dangers and distresses, as impended over them. Of which, amongst several instances, History affords us a full and lively picture, about the end of the fourth Century, in relation to the behaviour of the Citizens of ² *Antioch*, and the inhabitants of the ³ Provinces round it, who all of them expected every day, either to be banished, or put to the sword, because they had refused to pay the contributions which *Theodosius* had demanded from them, (in order to suppress a very dangerous rebellion,) and had thrown down the Statue of his deceased Empress ⁴ *Placilla*, a most worthy, charitable, religious Woman, and dragged it about the Streets.

¹ For weekly and annual Fastings, in the first ages of the Church; the Reader may consult Dr. Cave's *Primitive Christianity*. Part I. ch. 7. —— The Primitive Christians privately fasted, and mortified themselves, in times of public calamities, during the three first centuries. *Du Pin's Eccles. Hist.* Vol. I. sub fin.

² *Antioch* was a royal City, the Capital of the East. *Ammianus Marcell. Lib. 22.* It was also a *Anatolian* See, unto which all Syria belonged, and that part of Asia which was called *coniturum Orientis*.

³ *Chrysostomi Hom. 2. ad Popul. Antioch. Edit. Oxon. 8vo. 1590.* p. 29. (This second Homily in the several Editions is really the first Homily de Banis.) See also *Hom. 3d. p. 42. ibid.*

⁴ *Gregor. Nyssen. Orat. Funerat. in Placillam. Edit. Paris. fol. Tom. 2. p. 959.*

Upon this, the people of *Antioch* had immediate recourse to public humiliation, and intercessions to God, in which they deported themselves with all possible fervour, and sincerity. --- There was a new face of religion amongst them, sooner almost than could be conceived: Every day, for the space of a month, or more, they offered up prayers to God in their Churches, and heard discourses and exhortations, suitable to the occasion. In short the Fast which they kept, was a real, sincere, religious *Fast*, and consequently, was accepted of as such, by God: who, as we are told, miraculously disposed the heart of *Theodosius* to compassion, notwithstanding he had divested the See of *Antioch* of its Metropolitan honours, and had sent his General thither, in order to confiscate the goods of the inhabitants, and afterwards destroy them, and their City together.

The whole Change which is here wrought, is attributed entirely to God's mercy, pursuant to the sincere earnest repentance of the offending party: and indeed otherwise it would be very difficult to assign a reason, why *Theodosius*, should all of a sudden relent, and shed tears, upon the application of a single person to him, when 'tis well known, that, (notwithstanding he possessed several excellent qualities,) he was in the main of a temper, and disposition, extremely passionate. Now the person who un-

το ΝΗΣΤΕΙΑΝ δὲ εἰ ταῦτα λύγε τὸν πόλεων, ἀλλὰ τὸν ΑΚΡΙΒΗΝ
Necias, εἰ τὸν τὸ βραχίστην δέσμου μόνον, ἀλλὰ τὸν τὸν αἱρεστημένον.
 Οὐ γάρ ἡρῆ τὸ *Necias* οἱ φόνοι ιεραθεῖς τὸν μετονόμαστον, εἰπεν μὲν μὲν τῷ
 πολεμοῦστοι γεννηταῖς οἷς. Hom. 3: ad Popul. Antioch. p. 59.

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dertook this dangerous office of an intercessor, was *Flavian*, the great and illustrious *Arch-Bishop of Antioch*, One, who to a thorough knowledge of his duty, joined the perfect practice of Christianity; --- and yet *Flavian* himself confessed, upon being asked what arguments he had made use of in effecting his purpose, that "He, for his part had contributed nothing, but that God alone had inclined the Emperour to pardon his humble, and repentant people."

From the nature of these instances which I have recited to you, it appears, that Public Humiliation, duly performed, (and upon supposition that all past National Offences have been already expiated,) will very rarely fail of Engaging God on our side, even when the Sword it self threateneth us; which doubtless is a situation of things, extremely terrifying, hazardous, and destructive.

'Tis true, we cannot presume to say, that any behaviour of ours in these cases, will assure us certainly of God's immediate favour and protection, since the ways and methods of his punishing mankind (altho' infinitely just and wise,) are *unsearchable* to us, and *not to be comprehended*; and since we can never presume to assert, When it is, that he will cease to visit us for the sins of our forefathers: Or will vouchsafe to accept our own humble repentance, and defend, and bless us, consequent thereon. But This we know, that repentance and amendment are appointed by him as the means whereby

¹ Chrysostom. Hom. 21. ad Popul. Am. p. 323.

every Nation is to obtain national favour, and protection from him; and indeed common reason, unassisted by Revelation, always directed men to have recourse to God, and humble themselves before him upon these occasions; Agreeably to which, we find many instances in *Greek* and *Roman* History, of public Enquiries into the will of the Deities, and of many amendments and reformations in government, upon the approach of war, which the inhabitants of the several respective countries, generally took care to usher in with Sacrifices. In doing which, they certainly proceeded upon wise and good human reasonings. They observed in the nature of things, That *Communities* had *moral* capacities: that is, were capable of Virtue and Vice, and consequently of rewards, and punishments, as well as private persons. Whence they judged it proper, that as for any general blessing, or deliverance, acknowledgments should be publickly offered up to the Deity; so likewise, that, upon being threatened with any common danger or calamity, He should be propitiated with public submissions, and intercessions. --- For in truth, every Society, collectively considered, has, what one may call, *national merit*, or *demerit*, inasmuch as 'tis capable of acting right or wrong in its public capacity: (the exception of a single person or two here or there, not at all altering the case as to the Whole:) It has also a particular interest of its own to be pursued, in its commerce and intercourse with neighbouring countries; wherein it is to govern

vern it self by the known laws of Scripture, and Nations. Every Society, I say, in this respect, may be justly considered as a single Agent, being equally capable of reward, and liable to punishment; Nor does it differ from an individual moral agent, except, that from the nature of things, it must receive its rewards, and punishments in the present world.

I may add further, that good men should never neglect the smallest opportunity of promoting the commerce, the liberties, the religion of their respective countries, since doing This, is really, and in effect, doing good to themselves. For, to say truth, Public and Private interest are by no means to be considered as things *contradistinct*: Since public Good necessarily diffuses it self, like light, upon every private object: and since each distinct individual, being placed by Providence in this or that respective station, and having such and such particular personal duties to perform, must, more or less, contribute his share, towards carrying on the movements of that great machine, which is called the *State*.

There are other very cogent National reasons, that will induce us to practise public Humiliation upon these occasions. On the one hand, Nothing can instill into us more serious notions, than the idea of an approaching War, inasmuch as 'tis generally one continued Scene of devastation, and bloodshed, and since the natural horrors of it, are often, too often increased by the passions of cruel avaricious men. Hence *David* chose rather to submit to any

visitation of pestilence and famine sent from God, (*whose mercies, said he, are great,*) than fall into the power of his fellow-creatures. On the other hand, Nothing more naturally than the Event of war serves to remind us, of having recourse to divine assistance, and that only: Since the success of it depends upon the combinations of a thousand circumstances, and contingencies, half of which the greatest Genius can neither foresee, nor prevent.

I may observe further, that nothing but a just sense of *religion*, will ever inspire any army with true patience in times of distress, or with rational intrepidity in the hour of action. A man indeed may be insensible of fear, but I much question whether he can be truly courageous, without religion. He may have what we call a constitutional firmness of mind, which from the make of his body, may be very seldom, if ever, disconcerted: Or he may have a certain slowness in his perceptions, which may allow the danger to pass by, before he has formed a clear, and accurate judgment of it: But thus much one may venture to affirm, that such a man, (supposing him to be devoid of virtue and religion,) will never be able to justify his conduct to himself, or undergo any serious, and continued thoughts of dying, without distrust, and anxiety. In short, he that lives best, will die bravest: -- and hence we may observe in profane History, that very small Bodies of men, whilst they lived virtuously and frugally, (as most states are apt to do in their infancy,) seldom or never were over-run

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by the armies of any neighbouring Tyrant, how powerful soever: On the contrary, a few discomfited *a thousand*: for they fought for their altars and liberties against men, who were, properly speaking, the unwilling executioners of some wicked Prince's ambition.

It is well known that the *Roman* Emperours never had any troops that served them so bravely, and faithfully, as the Christians did; which amazing firmness, and intrepidity of theirs in primitive ages, was so well remembered afterwards, by that most artful of all dissemblers, Julian the Apostate, that he retained great numbers of them in his army, notwithstanding he affected to despise their holy religion.

And now I shall conclude this branch of my Discourse, with those words that *Azariab* spoke to a victorious army, unto whom God alone had given success; *Hear me, says he, all Judah and Benjamin, the Lord is with you, while ye are with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you, but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.*

2 Chron. 15. 2.

Having thus pointed out to you the advantages which arise from Public Humiliation, whenever we lie under the apprehensions of an approaching War, I shall now in the second place, endeavour to show you, that we have highly probable reasons of expecting Success, provided we follow those rules of public Humiliation that have been suggested, and

II. Provided, the War in it self be *just*, and *lawful*.

Now

Now the words of my text pre-suppose War in it self to be lawful, from the blessings which God has promised to bestow on it, in case we undertake it according to the manner which he himself has prescribed, namely, *when the Enemy oppresseth us*: Which happens precisely to be the very state and situation of our affairs, at this present juncture.

War also, (and here I must beg leave to be understood, as speaking of war in regard to *foreign nations*, and in *no other sense*,) War, I say, after all human expedients have been tried, and found ineffectual, may be pronounced *just* and *lawful*, not only in times of actual invasion, but when we apprehend, and consequently are desirous to prevent such oppressions, as in the end must conclude in actual invasion: Or in other words, It is allowable for us to engage in War, not only when our religious and civil constitution, when our private liberties and properties are endangered in the manner above spoken of, but when we perceive that our lawful rights abroad, and our antient established commerce are unjustly infringed, or encroached on, by any neighbouring Prince, or State. --- Nor are we to sit by, as idle spectators, whenever it shall happen that a cruel ambitious Monarch is resolved to over-run an innocent nation, or our own allies. Yet still we must remember to use all possible human circumspection, and deliberation, upon these occasions; since Engaging our selves in war, is unquestionably an undertaking of a highly dangerous, important nature: and since the promoters

ters and authors of it, must be responsible for every life that is lost, for every outrage committed, and for every family ruined, provided it shall appear hereafter, that the causes and motives which induced them to act, were only their own interest, resentment, or ambition. Therefore in War, and all such pressing and trying conjectures, a man must examine the very innermost recesses of his heart, and lay them all open before God: Let him only do this sincerely and uprightly, without reserve, and questionless he will never give consent to a rash, or unlawful War; Especially if to the warmth of Loving his Country, he takes care to add the conscientiousness of Religion.

Nor do these difficulties and restrictions any ways hinder War from being lawful in certain supposeable cases, and circumstances, particularly such as have been described unto you above. And by the way, I will just observe to you from the New Testament, that St. John Baptist's answer to the Soldiers plainly shows us, that their Calling in it self may be a very lawful one, if they only take care in other points to live up to the characters of honest men. *Luke 3.14.*

And indeed there must be such a thing as lawful War, in the very nature of human affairs. For as Societies, and Kings the representatives of them have rights and liberties, as well as private persons, so consequently they may receive a diminution of those rights and liberties, from the oppressions, and invasions of their neighbours, and in the end must have

some last resource, one way or other, either of extricating, or vindicating themselves. Now every person will readily see, that these *differences* between free and independent states, do not fall under the cognizance of human courts, and judicatures; Nor does experience prove that *they* have been much composed, and adjusted, even by Treaties themselves: which are too often, if I may so say, a sort of tryal of political skill, and not a search after truth, or religious adherence to impartial justice; and as to Calling in any third person, or state, by way of arbitrator, that practice, tis well known, cannot always be successful, since in general, 'tis only introducing a self-interested judge, who will probably sacrifice both parties to his own avarice, and ambition. -- Hence it appears that matters of Right and Oppression between Kingdom and Kingdom (whenever they proceed to very high degrees) can seldom properly be rectified and adjusted but by War, which, as holy Scripture tells us, is a sort of reference and appeal to the justice of God, who is the supreme arbitrator in these cases, and consequently the Author and Disposer of good, or evil² success, according to the ³ past, and present merits of the contending nations.

¹ Judg. XI. 27.

² 1 Chron. XXIX. 11.

³ A nation may happen to be *unfortunate* in war, altho' engaged in a just cause; And may be unfortunate also in other cases, if it labours under any grievous sin, hitherto unexpiated. See Exod. IV. 23. XXXIV. 7. Numb. XIV. 18. If. LXV. 6, 7. Jer. XXXII. 18. Mat. XXIII. 34, 35. Nor are these texts any ways invalidated by Deut. XXIV. 16. Jer. XXXI. 30. Ezek. XVIII. 20: if the latter texts are rightly explained, and duly compared with the context of their respective chapters.

Bat after all this, we may still form a clearer notion of the nature of War, --- of the lawfulness of it in several supposable cases and circumstances, --- and of the relation and reference wherein we stand in regard to the supreme Judge, and sovereign Disposer of all things, --- if we only take the pains to look a little more closely into the rise and nature of Civil Society. For if we trace the original of Society to its very source, we shall then find, that Mankind is represented in Scripture as one great family, under the sole government of God, the common Father and Head of it.

As all men were originally formed after his image, so each man was made capable of the same degree of perfection, as his fellow-creatures were, and designed for the same happiness. Hence arose the obligation upon us to love, aid, and support each other, as being brethren amongst our selves, and children and images of the same heavenly Father.

Not only our souls, but even our bodies were made to spring from one common original, to the end, that being allied in both respects or capacities, we might be more closely united in our affections. And indeed how happy would it have been for us, if we could all have continued in this Natural State. Then truly there would have been no need of human Sanctions to enforce the great Law of Nature, nor of magistrates to compel us to our duty, nor of armies to extort from our enemies what reason and justice cannot obtain.

*Now add a chapter on the law of Nature
and the law of God.*

Bat

But the first man, by rebelling against God, soon sowed the seeds of dissention in his own family, which sprung up and overspread the face of the whole earth. By withdrawing his allegiance from his Maker, he became a slave to his passions, to pride, avarice, and ambition, from whence arose violence, rapine, and War.

Mankind reduced to this unhappy state, were obliged (the better to provide for their common safety, and defence,) to form themselves into societies, and bodies politic. As the earth was free to the first possessor, so possession consequently gave property: and properties were afterwards transfer'd by compact; from whence appears the unlawfulness of conquest. --- Societies therefore, as well as individuals, have their properties, both natural, and acquired. --- Now that is a property which none can claim but the proprietor, and which he may lawfully defend, or recover by force, even at the peril of his adversary's life. --- Take away this right of defending property, and you take away the thing it self: Since the greatest power will then give the best title. --- We may observe further, that the Law inflicts capital punishment upon those who by open violence rob a man of his property: The reason is, that the Law is founded upon, and invested with men's natural right of securing their property: and what may be done to secure it, may be done in defence of it,

This reasoning will be still more forcible and conclusive, when 'tis applied to Society: The rights of Society being more sacred than those of individuals, in proportion as the well-

being

being of many, is of greater importance than that of one; and as God vouchsafes to interest himself in every, the smallest circumstance that relates to private persons, consequently he will preside more especially over the events of *war*, upon which the fates of kingdoms and nations depend; for if every individual be the object of his care, much more are bodies and communities of men, and the rather, since the happiness of individuals depends upon the safety and welfare of the Public.

As War therefore is supposed to be under the more immediate inspection of God, consequently it ought to be entered upon for no reasons, but such as are clear and cogent beyond dispute. Since in the same sense as we invoke the supreme Being to interpose for us in a *good* cause, we require of him also, if I may so say, to take due vengeance upon us, provided the cause be *bad*. Upon this account it behoves Princes to rely much upon their own apprehensions of things, as well as the advice, and experience of others: and to plan out to themselves very perfect notions of justice, equity, and public faith.

Happy would it have been for human Society, if Crowned Heads could always have thought, and acted in this manner. On the contrary, too many of them have made war the instrument of their lusts, their resentments, their avarice, and their ambition. Others again, have over-run, and depopulated every nation around them, merely out of the vanity of being Conquerors: little foreseeing, that

Victory it self may be attended with very fatal consequences: and that the *balance of power* will be as much destroyed by over-weakening an enemy, as by aggrandizing an ally. — Whereas if Princes considered *War*, as a sort of reference and appeal to the justice of God, (upon supposition that all endeavours towards reconciliation have been found to prove ineffectual,) doubtless then they would never presume to enter upon it, without having acted in such a manner as will entitle them probably to divine protection, and favour: Since *righteousness*, in this sense, as much as any other, giveth success and *exaltation to a kingdom*, Prov. 14. 34. *God himself being the judge who pulleth down one, and setteth up another.* Ps.

75. 7.

Thus have I sketched out unto you an imperfect, but I hope not unfaithful representation of the *nature* of War, and the *lawfulness* of it. To which I shall only add, by way of conclusion under this Head of my Discourse, That the *present* War according to the rules above laid down, is not only *lawful*, but *necessary* too: --- Consequently, that all good Subjects will contribute readily towards it not only with their wishes, but with their assistance; --- and that a *Prince* could not give his people, a stronger mark of zeal and affection for their well-being, than by Engaging in it chearfully and vigorously, with a firm and settled resolution of preserving the Commerce, and vindicating the Honour of the *British Nation*.

III. I shall

III. I shall now in the third place, endeavour to throw together some general Reflections, which arise naturally from what has preceded.

i. And First, As Nothing can really sanctify a National Fast but National amendment, so Nothing can truly promote the well-being, and glory of any particular Kingdom, except it be the united virtues of the whole Community : except men are bred up in clear and confirmed notions of piety, and honesty : except they have a serious veneration for the Constitution and Laws whereby they are governed : except they are taught to consider innovators in Religion, and in the State, as self-interested self-sufficient men : and lastly, except they have a rational vital Sense of Primitive Christianity, in opposition to all Heresies, and all modern licentious thinking whatsoever. These opinions, and this behaviour will of themselves, humanly speaking, produce unanimity, peaceableness, temperance, industry and wealth amongst any people, and (which is infinitely more desirable and esteemable,) will not fail in the end to draw down upon them the constant approbation, and protection of God. *Then will the beauty of perfection shine out of Zion,* Psalm, 50. 2. *A nation ransomed thus by the Lord shall obtain joy and gladness, sorrow and sighing shall fly away from it,* Isaiah 35. 10. Whereas on the other hand, whenever any Kingdom is notoriously corrupted in its religion,

gion, and dissolute in its morals, then it happens, that all its glory vanishes imperceptibly, and that the very constitution of it is preyed upon, and eaten out, one perceives not how. *Strangers*, as the Prophet *Hosea* says, *devour the strength of such a people, yet they know it not; nay, gray hairs are here and there upon them, yet they know not.* Ch. 7. 9. — From whence it appears, that the Welfare of the *Civil State*, is always connected with that of the *Religious* one; and upon this account it was, that the *ten Tribes of Israel* were condemned by God to a long captivity, because they refused to go up, and worship at *Jerusalem*, according to the custom commanded to their forefathers. And thus by casting our eyes upon later history, we may observe, that several large dominions in *Asia* and *Africa*, (where the blessed tydings of the *Gospel* were first imparted,) soon of themselves decayed away insensibly, when they neglected to keep alive that light which God himself had kindled up amongst them. So that now 'tis notorious to every man's observation, that ignorance, cruelty, and tyranny triumph in those places, where the lustre, and peace, and true liberty of Christianity first flourished.

2. *Secondly*, In order to effect this national amendment of ours the better, 'tis a highly necessary part of our duty, to form right notions not only of God's blessings, but of his mercy and forbearance towards us. Sometimes indeed one is inclinable to think, that this Nation, from the very nature and temper of it, is not capable of making its self easie in times of prosperity:

sperity: Nor do we always upon these occasions, take care to offer unto God that true and only honour which he expects from us, namely gratitude and holiness of living, tho' perhaps we have received more eminent and more continued blessings from him, than any Nation ever did receive, except the Jewish. --- The temperateness of our climate, and the very situation of our Island, (which at one and the same time both protects us from our enemies, and enriches us by commerce,) are circumstances which entitle us to be called, if I may be allowed the expression, the *favourites* of Heaven; especially, if 'tis remembered further, that *We alone* have enjoyed a pure and reformed Religion, a free use and study of holy Scripture, an equal and well-balanced form of Government, while most of our neighbours have long and grievously groaned under the yoke of religious corruption, ignorance and slavery. --- We have always one certain way left of continuing amongst us the *peculiar* favours of God, and that is, by living, and acting so, as to make God our Friend, and by firmly believing that the Religion of our forefathers cannot be amended by any innovations whatsoever. Artful and factious men undertook to change it about a Century ago, and by over-refining what *they* called the Purity of it, they made it a sort of feigned representation, in which honest men could not act, tho' it served very well to answer the ends of some people, who were not in earnest. I need not tell you how God thought fit to punish us for these

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things. --- But in one observation you will all prevent me, which is, that we are now running into an Extreme equally wicked and dangerous: Since men, instead of being cured by the evil effects of pretended Religion, are hastening, as fast as lies in their power, into no Religion at all: and as once twas the custom to interpret Scripture so, as to make it the author of sin, so truly now tis esteemed matter of sagacity and greatness of thinking, to deny not only the reasonableness and expediency thereof, but the very possibility of its being revealed. Such men, tis true, never will, nor can prevail against God: --- The lustre of Christianity will always break thro' the cloud of objections which they throw upon it: nay, the smallest and least considerable writer on our side will always be able to overthrow the ill-grounded railly, and artful sophistry of these Scorners, since in this sense, the very gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim will be better than the vintage of Abiezzer: --- Yet still I must take the liberty to tell you, that tho' such men cannot destroy God's religion, yet they can draw down God's judgments upon the unhappy Nation wherein they live, which is in it self a very terrifying and melancholy circumstance.

3. Thirdly, After what has been said of our Church and Religion, it will behove us to consider what fatal consequences attended those bold pernicious Notions concerning Government, which greatly prevailed in the age I alluded to just above, and infected the minds of

Judg. VIII. 2.

too

too many men, by a sort of contagion. It would always have been right for such persons to have asked themselves seriously this important question, whether they were angry with some certain circumstances attendant upon the English Constitution at such and such particular times, or whether they were angry with the Constitution in general, and in it self; Since Monarchy, according to the manner tis established and limited by the Laws of these Kingdoms, is questionless the very best and happiest Form of Government, being so wisely and fortunately calculated, as to protect us from the pernicious effects of popular Licentiousness on the one hand, and of arbitrary Power on the other hand. ---- That there may be faults in Monarchical Government will be readily allowed: and faults there must be in every, the very best human Constitution; We must allow further, that the fewer such faults are, and the sooner they are remedied, the better it is for the People governed; But to change and over-turn the Constitution it self, as these men actually did, was applying to some of those popular, but desperate remedies, of which much is said, and by which nothing good can be performed. Since the form of Government which they introduced, was little more than a mock-appearance of Liberty, where all, who had not a part in the administration, were slaves.

Indeed it would be best for all countries, if the generality of private subjects would practise obedience, instead of amusing themselves with

with theories about government: Since every man would find matter enough for reformation, if he would only be pleased to examine himself: nor would he ever want due employment, if he only confined himself to his own little sphere of acting: *It being the wisdom of the prudent, as Solomon says, to understand one's own way.* PROV. 14. 8.

4. *Fourthly, and lastly,* from what has been said let us persuade our selves, that Religion and Religious Loyalty are the only true and certain supports of any King or Kingdom. The best Christians will always make the best subjects, and therefore ought always to be most esteemed and cherished by the Civil Power. Of these two truths, we have a very remarkable instance in the History of *Constantius Chlorus*, the father of *Constantine the Great*. This Monarch, according to ¹ *Eusebius's* account of him, had once a mind to try the sincerity of some Christian subjects, who held high offices under him, in the several provinces. Upon this account he issued out an edict, that each of them should either offer sacrifices to Demons, or resign his employments: of which the consequence was that some complied, and some refused. Then, says my Author, this great and wonderful Man discovered the hidden purposes of his mind: He immediately took care to shew all possible affection and favour to the conscientious party, but as to the others, he said, "How shall these men ever preserve inviolable faith to

¹ In *Vit. Constantini.* L. I. c. 16. wards

wards their Emperor, who cannot preserve it towards God, in greater matters?"

Thus have I suggested to you three or four general reflections; In addition to which I shall only observe, that, *if our hosts when they go out against the enemy, keep themselves from every wicked thing*, Deut. 23. 9. Then God Himself will be with us, and who will presume to say that they are *against us?* Then, as we are told upon this occasion, "We shall rightly and duly humble our selves before Almighty God, and shall avert those heavy judgments which our manifold sins and provocations have most justly deserved, and shall implore God's blessings and assistance on our Arms, and shall restore and perpetuate peace, safety, and prosperity to our selves, and his Majesty's Kingdoms."

I shall conclude all with some very remarkable words of *Solomon* on the like occasion, being a part of his Prayer at the consecration of the Temple. *If thy People*, says he to God, *go out to War against their Enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee towards this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: --- then hear thou from the Heavens their prayer, and their supplication, and maintain their Cause.* 2 Chron. 6. 34,

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* His Majesty's Proclamation of War.

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